UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
16th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 29 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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91-56893 5160S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/46/SR.16
12 November 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/3, A/46/6/Rev.1, A/46/7 and A/46/16 and Add.1)

First reading

Section 1. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to consider the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 section by section. He drew the Committee's attention to the procedure to be followed, and indicated that particular points of difficulty would be set aside for informal consultations, on the understanding that, in general, entire sections should not be set aside. The recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination would be submitted to the Fifth Committee on a section-by-section basis.

2. At the end of the first reading, all the amounts approved section by section, plus those approved in respect of revised estimates or programme budget implications, would be gathered together in order to approve in second reading the total programme and appropriation for each section.

3. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) recalled that at the forty-fourth session the Committee had undertaken to adopt the proposed programme budget by consensus, which it had done after lengthy debate. He asked the Chairman whether it was his intention to proceed in the same manner.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that that was indeed his intention, and invited members of the Committee to consider section 1, which comprised two subsections: "A. Policy-making organs" and "B. Executive direction and management". The total estimates proposed by the Secretary-General under section 1 amounted to $35,861,200.

5. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that section 1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 differed greatly from that for the biennium 1990-1991, having been streamlined in a restructuring and rationalization exercise. With regard to subsection 1.A, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had been moved to section 4 and the World Food Council to section 11. Subsection 1.B no longer dealt with General Assembly affairs or Economic and Social Council affairs, which had been moved to section 4. Special Political Affairs, the Office for Research and the Collection of Information and the Office of the Coordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon were now included under section 2.

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6. The rate of real growth under section 1, calculated at 1.4 per cent, was attributable to an increase in travel expenditure in respect of certain committees and the establishment of two additional posts, a new post requested for ACABQ being offset by the elimination of another post for that same body. The two additional posts, referred to in paragraphs 1.12 and 1.49 of the proposed budget, were fully justified in view of the increase in the workload. The Secretariat found the CPC proposal regarding joint consideration of the establishment and reclassification of posts extremely interesting.

7. Non-recurrent expenditure was not reflected in the calculation of the rate of real growth. Such expenditure amounted to $1,963,000, and was entirely attributable to work to be carried out in the Secretary-General's residence, as indicated in paragraph 1.44 of document A/46/6/Rev.1.

8. Neither ACABQ nor CPC had requested a report under section 1. The only report relating to the section was that dealing with relations between the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the strengthening of services at Vienna; it would be taken up under section 21 (Social development and humanitarian affairs).

9. The Secretariat concurred in the comment by ACABQ that the rate of real growth should reflect reductions arising as a result of underutilized balances, and would recalculate the rate accordingly. Pursuant to a further recommendation of ACABQ, the Secretariat had calculated the distribution of the total reduction of $13 million arising as a result of taking underutilized balances into account and would make the information available to members of the Fifth Committee in informal consultations.

10. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) thanked the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division for the information given about the growth rate which would result from application of the ACABQ recommendations and said that he would not comment on the matter until the new rate was known; in view of the explanation given, the rate ought to be different from the one indicated at the previous meeting.

11. For section 1 of the budget ACABQ had recommended a slight reduction of $577,400 in the appropriations requested for 1992-1993. The reduction would be achieved by the following cuts: $300,500 from under-utilized balances, $247,500 from printing, and $29,400 from the heading "Others".

12. With regard to the reduction recommended in under-utilized balances, the estimates of expenditure for section 1 were considerably lower than the appropriations for the section in previous programme budgets. For the biennium 1988-1989, for example, the initial estimate for section 1 had been $44,982,900. The revised appropriation had been $48,426,300, but the actual expenditure had been only $46,727,100. Furthermore, that figure included

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unliquidated obligations of $1,338,300, of which $195,100 was not spent. Therefore 4 per cent of the total appropriations had not been spent. If the Advisory Committee had had that information during its consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, it would have taken it into account.

13. At all events, even if the appropriation under section 1 was lower than in previous programme budgets, when the final revised estimates for 1992-1993 were submitted to the General Assembly the Secretariat would verify, as it did for every programme budget, that no section had suffered significantly as a result of the reductions, and funds could if necessary be transferred from one section to another.

14. Turning to the specific reductions recommended, he said that the appropriation requested for ACABQ itself had been subjected to very close scrutiny and, in view of the need to limit expenditure, it had been thought preferable for the new post to be at the P-5 rather than the D-1 level, on the understanding that the Advisory Committee would review the situation in the future. It recommended that the post referred to in paragraph 1.7 should be financed partly from the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations and partly from extrabudgetary funds.

15. With regard to the United Nations Board of Auditors, ACABQ noted that a greater proportion of external audit costs were to be charged to the extrabudgetary programmes involved. It had examined the external audit costs in detail with the auditors and would take the information received into account when it considered the next report on external auditing assignments.

16. The Advisory Committee had concluded that the maintenance work on the Secretary-General's residence was justified by the information provided to it and recommended that the requested appropriation should be approved. In contrast, the requested reclassification to the D-1 level of the post of Chief of Protocol at Geneva had not seemed justified; rejection of the request would produce a reduction of $19,500 in the appropriation requested for the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

17. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) noted that the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on section 1 appeared in paragraphs 56 to 60 of its report. CPC had noted that the activities corresponding to policy-making organs and to executive direction and management were not within the framework of the medium-term plan. The Committee had recommended deletion of the first sentence of paragraph 1.60 since it referred to a document which merely enumerated objectives without elaboration. CPC had emphasized that the scheduling and duration of its meetings might be revised in the light of General Assembly resolution 45/264 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/67, by which CPC had been requested, bearing in mind its increased workload ensuing from the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213, to review its

programme of work and make suggestions on the timing and duration of its sessions. The Committee stressed that such a review of the timing and duration of its sessions could affect the budget estimates.

18. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that, in its resolution 1991/16, adopted by consensus by 20 States representing every geographical region, the Economic and Social Council had requested the Secretary-General to add specific recommendations, within the overall level of the budget of the Organization, to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 to strengthen and rationalize the resources of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in order to enable it better to fulfil its mandate and carry out its activities in the social and related fields and for the advancement of women. The Secretary-General had not submitted any of the recommendations requested. The outstanding proposals, which would probably be submitted under section 21, were likely to have implications for other sections. Accordingly, her delegation was of the view that the section-by-section review was of necessity only provisional in nature.

19. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that his delegation was satisfied with the rate of real growth in respect of policy-making organs (negative 1.9 per cent) under subsection 1.A, but stressed the need to continue efforts to reduce the amount of expenditure on meetings and reallocate such resources to substantive activities.

20. The proposed increase in travel of representatives attending General Assembly sessions ($165,000) was extremely disquieting. The Secretariat seemed to have misinterpreted Part XIII of resolution 45/248. Under current provisions travel expenses were paid for five representatives of each Member State classified among the least developed countries, with one authorized to travel in the class immediately below first class. Paragraph 1.7 of the proposed programme budget suggested that the provision would be revised to allow a greater number of representatives to travel in a higher class. That possibility had not been envisaged in the debate on the matter at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and, on the adoption of resolution 45/248, the Secretariat had not indicated that it intended to obligate additional expenditure under the regular budget on such a large scale. Further, under paragraph 4 of resolution 45/248, the General Assembly had clearly specified that upgraded travel arrangements should not lead to any additional expenditure. Accordingly, his delegation wished to know exactly what the Secretariat's intention was.

21. In paragraph 1.29, the Secretary-General proposed a reduction in the proportion of external audit costs charged to the regular budget. He would like confirmation as to whether the extrabudgetary programmes involved had actually agreed to assume a greater proportion of such costs.

22. As had been noted at earlier sessions, much remained to be done to improve the working methods of CPC. His delegation hoped that the spring

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session of CPC would lead to far-reaching reforms and that the Secretariat would make a greater effort to provide it with the requisite conference services. His Government did not see why CPC needed to hold a six-week session in 1992. The consideration of revisions to the medium-term plan for 1992-1997 should not take that long. The United States therefore proposed that the spring session should be shortened by at least one week.

23. In section 1, subsection B, funds had been requested to renovate the residence of the Secretary-General, part of which related to redecoration and the purchase of furnishings. His delegation was not opposed to the proposal, but sought clarification on the Organization's policy in that regard. It was under the impression that furnishings had been purchased at the beginning of the 1980s at considerable cost and it would therefore like confirmation that they in fact remained the property of the United Nations. The Organization should also solicit voluntary contributions in cash and in kind for the renovation work, following the current practice in the United States and, no doubt, in other countries.

24. His delegation regretted that the Secretary-General continued to request funds for a post of Under-Secretary-General in the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna. In so far as the General Assembly had decided to create a post at that level for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, it thought that there was no need for two such posts. In fact, his delegation wondered whether it was necessary to retain the Office of the Director-General at all. Most of the activities carried out by the Office could be transferred to the administrative services of the United Nations Office. A number of delegations had advocated strengthening other United Nations programmes financed from the regular budget at Vienna. In general, the United States supported those proposals, and to that end, it thought it might be possible to redeploy certain posts currently attached to the Office of the Director-General. In particular, the social programmes could be strengthened by entrusting the management of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to a high-level staff member who would assume that task on a full-time basis. The same arguments applied to the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. In view of the large administrative service and the many high-level posts at Geneva, it did not seem necessary to maintain a separate office for the Director-General, and the corresponding post could be transferred to the Centre for Human Rights.

25. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), referring to the P-5 post mentioned in paragraph 1.13 of the proposed programme budget, which was to be financed from the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations, said he thought that that Account had been created for the needs of staff specifically assigned to peace-keeping operations, and not to finance permanent posts.

26. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation found it difficult to agree to a number of the appropriations requested in the budget, but in view of the Committee's desire to adopt the budget by consensus, it did not intend to raise objections immediately on several of the Secretary-General's proposals which had been confirmed in the ACABQ recommendations. If other delegations voiced objections, however, his delegation reserved the right to revert to those questions.

27. With regard to the travel of representatives, the Secretary-General had been asked to submit a report on ways to streamline United Nations provisions in that regard. The question should be considered in that context.

28. In paragraph 1.46 of the proposed programme budget, the sum of $37,700 was requested under the heading "Furniture and equipment" to replace one of the official vehicles. At the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, his delegation had asked about the appropriateness of including that object of expenditure in the proposed programme budget for 1990-1991, since ACABQ had observed that, in its view, it constituted a contingency provision. His delegation was aware that estimates were approved section by section and not by object of expenditure, but it would nevertheless like to learn the size of the expenditure actually charged to those estimates.

29. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) recalled that the previous day, the delegation of France had asked for information to be provided section by section on the unutilized balances of the previous budget. His delegation inquired how the Secretariat intended to proceed in that regard. In order to speed up the work, such information might be communicated during informal consultations.

30. The explanations given in paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13 to justify strengthening the ACABQ secretariat were very persuasive. In the view of his delegation, it was necessary to strengthen not only the secretariat of the Advisory Committee, but also ACABQ itself, because its members, too, were affected by the increased workload. In paragraph 4.20, the Secretary-General proposed that the P-4 post of the Secretary of the Committee for Programme and Coordination should be upgraded to the P-5 level. In view of the importance of that post, particularly in the context of the new budgetary procedure, the proposal appeared to be too modest. His delegation was under the impression that the incumbent of the post was already at the P-5 level. If that was so, the proposed reclassification would have a purely fictitious character. More generally, Cuba considered that the new budgetary procedure and the more arduous tasks entrusted to the Organization necessitated a strengthening of the secretariats of ACABQ, CPC and the Fifth Committee.

31. The proposed programme budget referred to a concept which was commonly used by the Secretariat but which had not been approved by an intergovernmental body, namely "peace-keeping". His delegation asked for an explanation of that term. Lastly, it would like to know why, in paragraph 58 of its report, CPC had recommended the deletion of the first sentence of paragraph 1.60 of the proposed programme budget, which referred to the manual

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on the organization of the Secretariat for the United Nations Office at Geneva, whereas in paragraph 1.69 it would retain the reference to that document in connection with the United Nations Office at Vienna.

32. Mr. SUGARO (Japan) recognized that the complexity and volume of the work of ACABQ would appear to justify a staff increase. In order to be able to analyse the Committee's workload and the quality of results more precisely, his delegation asked the Secretariat to indicate the number of meetings held by the Committee in 1988-1989 and 1990-1991, broken down by area of activity. His delegation was not convinced that the changes proposed by the Secretary-General in the Advisory Committee's staffing table were valid. It was difficult to agree to a structure that was so top-heavy compared to that of CPC and the other main organs dealing with the budget. If the creation of a post was justified by an increase in the workload, a P-3 or P-4 post might suffice. The proposal to finance a P-5 post by charging it to extrabudgetary resources was very questionable. The Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations had been created specifically for administrative and logistic expenditure related to those operations. Using resources normally set aside for programme support to finance a policy-making organ - ACABQ in the current instance - might create a dangerous precedent. In view of the mandatory nature of the Advisory Committee's activities, the additional expenditure required for that body should be charged to the regular budget. Moreover, bearing in mind the Committee's workload, it might be useful for its members to specialize in the consideration of one or another sector of the budget.

33. With respect to the payment of travel expenses and subsistence costs of members of CPC, his delegation believed that the provisions of paragraph 12 of resolution 31/93 should be extended to the joint meetings of CPC and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), since the nature and scope of those meetings had changed radically. They now resulted in conclusions and recommendations which were submitted to the General Assembly. In that light, it was particularly important to ensure the regular participation of members of CPC in the meetings, especially since the issues dealt with were related to the coordination of the United Nations system. Japan therefore proposed that the General Assembly should invite the Secretary-General to make provisions to cover the travel and subsistence costs of CPC members, with effect from the twenty-seventh series of joint meetings of CPC and ACC in 1992, and to report on actual expenditures in the first programme performance report for the biennium 1992-1993.

34. His delegation supported all the other recommendations of ACABQ under section 1 of the proposed programme budget.

35. Mr. CONMY (Ireland) said that his delegation admired the dedication of the members of ACABQ in carrying out an increasingly arduous task. However, since the Advisory Committee was a specialized organ which provided advice on administrative and budgetary questions to the Organization as a whole, it

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should apply the strictest standards in every facet of its own staffing and internal administration. In that light, his delegation wondered whether it was justifiable to establish a post that would be partially financed from the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations, for two reasons: first, since the Advisory Committee performed an essential function within the Organization, it was inappropriate for it to use extrabudgetary resources; and, second, the Support Account had been in existence for only about a year and no report had been submitted to date on its operation. His delegation wondered whether other bodies might not be better entitled to draw on the resources of that account, in particular those directly associated with peace-keeping operations. In the absence of further information, it was not convinced of the appropriateness of even partially financing an ACABQ post on that basis.

36. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) recalled that, during the general debate, his delegation had agreed in principle with the recommendation of ACABQ that calculations of estimated expenditures for the proposed programme budget should be based on actual expenditures for previous bienniums. It had some doubts, however, about that method and thought that the issue should be examined in the context of the ad hoc seminar envisaged by CPC. In that connection, while it was still prepared to adopt the CPC report as a whole and by consensus, it was concerned about the implications of paragraph 49, which called for the participation of experts without cost to the Organization. It wondered whether that was the best way to encourage experts to participate in the seminar and suggested that the seminar should be financed by the Organization.

37. His delegation had no objection to the establishment of a P-5 post in the secretariat of ACABQ, as recommended in paragraph 1.12 of the Advisory Committee's report, or to the reclassification of a post in the secretariat of CPC from P-4 to P-5, as recommended in paragraph 4.10 of the same report. While the Secretariat had justified those requests by citing an increase in the workload, his delegation, like that of Tunisia, would like to receive more objective, reasoned explanations for the establishment or reclassification of posts. It supported the views of Japan regarding the need to finance the participation of representatives to the joint meetings of CPC and ACC from the regular budget.

38. At the present stage, in view of its agreement in principle with the recommendations of ACABQ as a whole, his delegation would refrain from commenting or taking a position on appropriations for approval under each section of the proposed programme budget.

39. Mr. BAZAN (Chile) referred to the question of the resources required to cover the travel and subsistence costs of representatives participating in the joint meetings of CPC and ACC. He pointed out that, in paragraph 12 of its resolution 31/93 of 1976, the General Assembly had decided that the Organization would pay for the travel expenses (economy class air fare) and

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subsistence allowance (at the standard rate plus 15 per cent) of a representative of each of the States which were members of CPC. He therefore requested the Secretariat to provide for the resources required to cover the future travel and subsistence costs of representatives participating in the joint meetings of CPC and ACC.

40. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) shared the concerns expressed by various delegations with respect to the use of the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations to finance the new P-5 post requested for the secretariat of ACABQ. His delegation would very much like that post to be financed from the regular budget since, under the system proposed by the Secretary-General, the United States contribution would amount to 30.3 per cent of the corresponding salary costs whereas it would be only 25 per cent if the post were charged to the regular budget.

41. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) wished to congratulate ACABQ on its moderation in requesting the establishment of only one P-5 post instead of the two posts proposed by the Secretariat. His delegation recognized the importance of the work of the Advisory Committee and therefore supported the strengthening of the work capacity of its secretariat. However, it questioned the financing of that post from the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations: financing from extrabudgetary resources ought to be done on an exceptional basis, and it was best to refrain from any measure that might compromise the independence of ACABQ. The post should therefore be included under the regular budget.

42. Mr. RAE (India) supported the Secretary-General's proposals under section 1, as amended by ACABQ. He also supported Japan's proposals regarding the financing of the travel expenses of representatives participating in the joint meetings of CPC and ACC.

43. With respect to the financing of the ad hoc technical seminar on the preparation of the budget, recommended by CPC, his delegation agreed with the Ugandan delegation that the seminar should be financed from the regular budget. Furthermore, the date of the seminar should be set to coincide with the next sessions of CPC and ACABQ; that would permit savings which could be reflected in the proposed budget.

44. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) supported the recommendation in paragraph 1.12 of the report of ACABQ regarding the creation of a new regular budget post for the Committee at the P-5 rather than the D-1 level. However, he would like to receive a detailed explanation of the reasons justifying the creation of that post.

45. On the issue of financing the new P-5 post from the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations, some clarification would appear to be necessary. In paragraph 1.7 of the report of ACABQ it was stated that that post would not be financed "entirely" from the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations. That implied that another source of financing would be used, and his delegation would like to know which.

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46. With respect to the proposed upgrading of a post from P-4 to P-5 for CPC, his delegation could see no objection if the duties associated with the post justified it. The workload of CPC had grown considerably and its secretariat really did need to be strengthened. The means for doing so could be discussed during informal consultations on that section.

47. The joint meetings of CPC and ACC should be financed from the regular budget. As for the length of the CPC sessions, given that it had become customary to extend them, it would be preferable to provide systematically for longer sessions when preparing the calendar of conferences.

48. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that the additional expenditures which various delegations were proposing to charge to the regular budget seemed to be attributable to the contingency fund. However, the rules governing the operation of the contingency fund specified that realistic alternative courses of action must be indicated in case the contingency fund could not accommodate the expenditure in question, as ACABQ pointed out in paragraph 78 of chapter I of its report. That procedure must be strictly observed under the budgetary process established by General Assembly resolution 41/213.

49. With regard to the staffing of the Advisory Committee secretariat, a parallel had been drawn with the CPC secretariat, which seemed to be justified because both bodies advised the Fifth Committee. It should be noted, however, that the post of Secretary of CPC was not a full-time post; other full-time expert committees, such as the International Civil Service Commission, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Board of Auditors, might provide better comparisons in so far as the financing of their staffing tables was concerned.

50. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) endorsed the statements made by various speakers concerning the financing of the staff and secretariat of ACABQ. Several delegations had mentioned the length of the sessions of CPC and had put forward proposals to ensure additional financing to cover the travel expenses of representatives participating in the joint meetings of CPC and ACC. In 1991, CPC had indeed held fewer meetings than anticipated, but they had lasted longer. It might be a good idea to consider, in informal consultations, financing representatives' participation in joint meetings of ACC and CPC through savings obtained by reducing the length of the CPC sessions.

51. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) supported the remarks made by the representative of the United Kingdom concerning the use of the contingency fund and its limits.

52. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) reminded the Committee that, in so far as the creation of posts was concerned, the Secretary-General could demonstrate that his proposals were justified by the increase in the workload.

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53. In answer to the comments made by the representative of Tunisia, he explained that the functions of ACABQ with regard to extrabudgetary resources had grown because the General Assembly was increasingly insistent on such resources being utilized rationally in the budgetary process. Financing some posts through support accounts was justified by the fact that the regular budget should not be used to finance posts which had had to be created because of an increase in extrabudgetary resources. As to how the financing of the proposed P-5 post would be divided between the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations and other extrabudgetary resources, that question would be considered in informal discussions.

54. In reply to the questions raised by the representative of Cuba, comparisons would first be made between the secretariats of various committees, then information about the posts and personnel in those secretariats would be provided when section 4 or section 1 was considered. With regard to the reclassification of the post of Secretary of CPC, it should be noted that the incumbent was already at the P-5 level; it was therefore natural for the Secretariat to propose reclassification of the post from P-4 to P-5.

55. With regard to the financing of the travel and subsistence expenses of representatives participating in the joint meetings of CPC and ACC, it was the Organization's practice not to bear such costs because the meetings were supposed to be held either at Geneva during the session of the Economic and Social Council or at New York during the session of the General Assembly. However, there was nothing in the resolution mentioned to preclude such expenses from being covered by the regular budget in the same way as the travel and subsistence expenses associated with regular sessions of CPC. If the Committee wished, the Secretariat would inform it of the amount of the expenses involved.

56. The Secretariat had taken note of the comments made by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Belgium concerning the contingency fund, and of the observations concerning the ad hoc technical seminar proposed by CPC, the cost of which was to be charged to the regular budget. The Secretariat would keep the Committee informed about the provisions made for the seminar.

57. Replying next to the representative of Austria, he said that the report in question had been requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1991/16. The Secretary-General had indicated at the time that he could not comply with the request because his proposals were already contained in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, and he could not at that stage issue a supplementary report which would require a modification of the budget proposals. However, as had been mentioned elsewhere, a report on the United Nations Office at Vienna which examined various aspects of the Office's operation, including the responsibilities of its Director-General in view of the new programmes that had recently been established, would be

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available shortly and should meet the Austrian delegation's concerns at least in part. That report would be considered during the reading of section 21 (Social development and humanitarian affairs).

58. In reply to the observations made by the representative of the United States of America, he confirmed that, with regard to the travel expenses of representatives attending the General Assembly, delegations from the 40 least developed countries would be entitled to reimbursement of their air travel expenses on the following basis: four out of five members of each delegation would be entitled to travel in the class immediately above economy class, the fifth being entitled to first class. The estimates relating to that object of expenditure had been calculated on the basis of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 45/248.

59. The decision to charge a larger proportion of external auditing expenditures to the budgets of the appropriate extrabudgetary programmes had been the subject of an explicit agreement with the managers of the programmes concerned. With regard to the furnishings to be purchased for the Secretary-General's residence, it was obvious that it would remain the property of the United Nations. No expense had been incurred in connection with the Secretary-General's official car in 1991 because the vehicle had been lent. However, because there was no guarantee that the Secretary-General's car would always be provided free of charge, estimates for that item had to be included in the budget, even if they were subsequently transferred to other objects of expenditure if they had not been used, as had happened in 1991. Details could be provided on the matter if delegations so wished.

60. The report on the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations would soon be available and would contain detailed information on the posts financed through the Account. That question would be considered in informal consultations.

61. In reply to the comments by the representative of Uganda on the reclassification or creation of posts, he said that, while he agreed with the general recommendation of CPC on the subject, he thought that such matters could only be decided section by section. In conclusion, he assured delegations that the Secretariat had taken note of all the questions to be considered further in informal consultations, and he confirmed that the information requested by the representative of France at the previous meeting would be provided shortly.

62. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that as a matter of procedure there was nothing wrong in financing the extrabudgetary post proposed for the Advisory Committee partly from the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations. Moreover, the account was already used to finance several support posts in various Secretariat units concerned with peace-keeping. It was indisputable that in ACABQ the volume of work relating to peace-keeping operations had increased

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considerably, as could be seen from the number of reports on the matter which it had submitted to the Committee. In 1991 ACABQ had already devoted roughly the equivalent of one month's work to such activities. Accordingly, it seemed justified for the proposed post to be charged at least partly to the Support Account. However, delegations considered that the Advisory Committee was a core unit of the United Nations and as such should be financed entirely from the regular budget. The Advisory Committee itself had no objection to that position of principle. It was for the Fifth Committee to decide whether all the cost of the post should be charged to the regular budget.

63. A report on the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations had been submitted to ACABQ which, in accordance with the procedure agreed at the forty-fifth session, would report to the Committee at a later stage on the proposals contained therein.

64. It must be stressed that the Advisory Committee's workload had increased enormously while its manning-table had remained unchanged for years, with the last new post dating back to 1977. The Advisory Committee was requesting only what was strictly necessary. It was ready to provide additional information on the topic during the informal discussions. In any event, it was important to ensure that the decisions taken helped to strengthen and not to weaken ACABQ.

65. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), replying to the questions put by delegations, explained, first, that it had always been necessary to extend CPC sessions. In fact, at its thirty-first session CPC had held fewer meetings and made better use of the conference services allocated to it than at the previous session at which it had considered the budget, namely the twenty-ninth session. The session had lasted one or two days longer than planned because conference services had not been available when required. The United States representative had proposed that the duration of the CPC spring session should be reduced. However, the agenda of that session, as approved by the Economic and Social Council (para. 478 of the CPC report), was already very heavy. Shortening the session would therefore make it necessary to reconsider the whole of CPC's programme of work, but that in itself would make the agenda of the session even heavier.

66. The question of the travel expenses of representatives attending joint meetings of CPC and ACC had been only discussed informally at the thirty-first session: it was therefore too early to comment on the matter. She wished, however, to confirm the nature of those meetings, as emphasized by the representative of Japan. At the latest joint meeting of CPC and ACC, held the previous week, a number of conclusions and recommendations had been adopted and arrangements made for follow-up, which was important in the case of coordination.

67. CPC had not taken up the question of the date and financing of the technical seminar mentioned in paragraph 49 of its report. Whatever decisions

(Ms. Berenguer)

were taken in that connection, the envisaged character of the seminar should not be changed, so that it could make a genuine contribution to solving the methodological problems associated with the preparation of the programme budget.

68. She would prefer to comment on the CPC secretariat when section 4 was considered. She likewise felt it would be more appropriate to explain CPC's concept of peace-keeping when section 2 of the budget was considered. With regard to the deletion of the first sentence of paragraph 1.60 of the proposed programme budget, CPC had made that recommendation because it felt there was no need to refer to document ST/SGB; if necessary, the activities of the units concerned could be described in detail.

69. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said he wished to know why it was proposed to delete that reference from paragraph 1.60, concerning Geneva, but to retain it in paragraph 1.69, concerning Vienna. With regard to the financing of the travel of representatives attending joint meetings of CPC and ACC, it had been suggested that those expenses should be covered by the reserve fund. However, the representative of Chile had observed that there was a General Assembly resolution containing explicit provisions concerning the financing of the travel of representatives attending CPC meetings. It would therefore be desirable to have further information on that subject.

70. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America), reverting to the question of the creation in ACABQ of a post financed partly from the Support Account for Peace-Keeping Operations, observed that if the post were financed entirely from the regular budget, the United States would pay only 25 per cent of the costs involved, as against 30.3 per cent under the scale of contributions applicable for peace-keeping operations. Since ACABQ had specified that the post would be financed partly from extrabudgetary funds, it would be helpful to have more information about the exact nature of those funds and the various modalities for financing the post in question.

71. With regard to the travel costs of representatives attending the General Assembly, according to resolution 45/248, section XIII, paragraph 4, the aim was to provide savings to the United Nations and upgraded travel arrangements to representatives. Explanations were therefore required concerning expenditures under that heading. With regard to the residence of the Secretary-General, his delegation wished to be assured that the furnishings currently in place would remain the property of the United Nations.

72. With regard to the duration of CPC sessions, at its most recent session that Committee had devoted about two weeks to budgetary questions and two weeks to other questions. Three weeks, one of which would be devoted to revising the medium-term plan, should suffice for the next session. With regard to the question of the travel of representatives attending joint

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

meetings of CPC and ACC, it should be remembered that the purpose of those meetings had originally been to facilitate exchanges of views at the highest possible level. Judging by the level of representation in the United States delegation, that objective had apparently not been attained.

73. Mr. SUGARO (Japan) said he wished to have a detailed description of the number of meetings held by ACABQ in 1988-1989 and 1990-1991, classified according to areas of activity.

74. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom), reverting to the question of the provision made for the Secretary-General's official car, expressed his delegation's reservations about the practice of including in the budget expenditures which, on the basis of past experience, there was every reason to believe would be unnecessary. He recalled in that connection that the Advisory Committee had recommended that under-utilized balances should be reduced by about 25 per cent, which was a modest aim given the volume of unutilized funds. Delegations had been told that they should not be concerned about the overestimation of expenses because the savings would be deducted from their contributions at the end of the biennium. Apart from the fact that experience showed that that was not the case, the practice of overestimating was not likely to encourage States to pay their contributions in full and on time. His delegation maintained that the budget estimates should be prepared in a very rigorous manner, since that was the only way of encouraging States to fulfil their obligations.

75. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) said he did not object to the post which it was proposed to create in ACABQ being financed from the regular budget rather than from extrabudgetary funds, provided that did not affect the financing of peace-keeping operations charged to the regular budget.

76. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) said that the problem relating to the creation of posts in ACABQ was one of relevance, not of financing. The first step should be to strengthen the Secretariat units dealing with the activities in question upstream from the Advisory Committee (in the Budget Division, for example).

77. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Fifth Committee decided to endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination concerning section 1 (A/46/16, paras. 56-60).

78. It was so decided.

79. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that given the number of questions still pending it was difficult for delegations to take a decision at the current stage on the estimates in section 1.

80. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the decision concerning section 1 as a whole should be postponed until the following meeting.

81. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.